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SPECIAL COMMITTEE AGAINST APARTHEID

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 667TH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 9 August 1993, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. GAMBARI (Nigeria)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE STRUGGLE OF WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

The CHAIRMAN: I have the honour to declare open the 667th meeting of the Special Committee against Apartheid, devoted to the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa, which was proclaimed by the General Assembly in resolution 35/206 N of 16 December 1980, and which is observed every year on 9 August.

This International Day is a tribute to all South African women, marking the thirty-seventh anniversary of the historic demonstration in 1956, when 20,000 valiant black and white women marched on the Union Building in Pretoria to protest the extension of the abhorred pass laws to African women.

Today, 37 years after that demonstration, and several years after the abolition of the pass laws, South African women continue to experience a great degree of deprivation and other forms of hardship. As we enter the twilight of apartheid and behold the threshold of a democratic and non-racial Constitution for all South Africans, the situation of South African black women who were victims of apartheid laws continues to demand our consideration and support. It is incumbent upon us, therefore, to continue to show solidarity with the women of South Africa and assist them in every way possible to overcome the socio-economic, racial and political inequities they still encounter in their everyday lives.

We in the Special Committee are, therefore, gratified that we have been joined in this observance by Mr. James Jonah, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, who is standing in for the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and by Mr. José Luis Jesus, Vice-President of the General Assembly, representing the President.

(The Chairman)

It is my special honour and privilege also to welcome our special guests, beginning with Ms. Joyce Brown, Deputy Mayor of New York City. I am naturally particularly delighted and honoured to be able to extend the warmest welcome from the Special Committee to two outstanding and extremely articulate representatives of South Africa's women today: Ms. Nkosazana Zuma of the African National Congress (ANC) and Ms. Cynthia Bekwa of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC).

I wish also to welcome the representative of the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) from the Permanent Mission of Egypt, Mrs. Dawlat Hassan and the Permanent Observer of Palestine, Mr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa, as well as presiding officers of United Nations bodies, Permanent Representatives and Observers, the representatives of national liberation movements and all others who are with us today.

May I now ask all present to stand and join me in observing a minute of silence in memory of all women who have lost their lives as victims of apartheid.

The participants observed a minute of silence.

The CHAIRMAN: I should now like to make a statement on behalf of the Special Committee against Apartheid.

Today we observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa by honouring the courageous women of that country and by remembering those who in August 1956 organized a peaceful protest against the unjust pass laws of the apartheid system. The black women of South Africa and their children have borne the brunt of the harsh policies of discrimination and therefore have played a central role in the long years of the liberation struggle. As everyone present will recall, the pass laws had forced men to

(The Chairman)

leave their families and look for work in mines and in other cities, abandoning women to deal with the traumas of violence and displacement, together with the pressure of heavy household duties and obligations, motherhood and day-to-day subsistence. In spite of their suffering, these women have demonstrated a capacity for defiance and a great power of endurance.

Black women have suffered special discrimination - as women, as blacks and as workers. They have traditionally been used as cheap, unskilled labour. Women make up 41 per cent of the economically active population, but still earn an average of only 70 per cent of men's earnings. Studies show that poverty is mostly encountered in the rural areas, among the young and among the very old. While constituting about 53 per cent of the population, women have gained little access to education and training. Their security concerns have continually been ignored, despite the fact that women and children are the most vulnerable groups in South Africa. They are often random victims of criminal or politically motivated violence and, in addition, of domestic violence. The number of women who are regularly subjected to physical and emotional abuse is increasing at an alarming rate in South Africa. Violence against women is a common but invisible problem - suffered in silence and in the privacy of their homes.

Many of the problems women face today are the long-term consequences of the apartheid system, which are still entrenched in the lives of the people and of society. The legacy of apartheid, compounded as it is by the existence of traditional and social norms which infringe on the rights of women, has posed serious obstacles to their full participation in development.

The struggle for women's rights has long been overshadowed by the broader struggle against the apartheid system itself. Gender equality has been seen

(The Chairman)

as secondary to the issue of racial equality. Women's organizations, whether in the church, politics or the workplace, are social agents, but rarely agents of their own interests as people and as women. During earlier negotiations women's groups were excluded from the negotiation process, which meant that gender issues were often sidelined and recommendations were submitted too late to be adopted.

The growing strength of women's organizations, as well as an increasing awareness of the importance and urgency of addressing issues of women, who constitute 54 per cent of the voting population, helped bring about a significant victory this year. The issue of gender has been placed on the national liberation agenda of South Africa as well as in multiparty negotiations, and it has been decided to integrate women into the constitutional process. While there is indeed reason to celebrate this milestone, it is also important to note that much remains to be done to compensate for the imbalances of the past as well as to create the space for women to realize their full potential as human beings and as citizens in the future.

In May this year the Women's National Coalition, an umbrella organization of some 55 women's groups, met in Johannesburg to begin to assess women's needs and to act as the focal point to work on a women's charter. Their main objective is to campaign for the inclusion of a charter of women's rights in a future democratic Constitution of South Africa. Women across the political and social spectrum are presently making their voices heard on issues such as federalism, customary law, security, constitutional equality and economic empowerment. A new democratic Constitution should ensure that equal rights for all women are fully and affirmatively reflected, giving them the

(The Chairman)

opportunity to play a full, equal and effective role in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the nation.

South African women today are facing an extraordinary challenge. As the infrastructure for a new democratic society develops in South Africa, women are in a strategic position to advocate equity as well as to contribute to the final blueprint for a new South Africa. It is therefore crucial that women's organizations, trade union women, women's anti-violence campaigns and regional and grassroots bodies be strengthened and maintained during this process.

The Special Committee supports the women of South Africa in pursuing their goal of exercising their right to take part in the political process on an equal footing with men - a process that will have a direct effect on the lives of their families. It further encourages the active participation of all women, black and white, and pledges its moral support for their campaign for constitutional rights in a democratic South Africa. Negotiators must remember that for the transitional process to be all-inclusive and equitable the interests of the major segment of the country's population must be part and parcel of the final result.

The task of nation-building which awaits a new South African Government is overwhelming. Expectations are high for immediate compensation and remedies for the glaring socio-economic inequalities in many areas, including education, housing, employment and health services. The Special Committee, in doing its part to facilitate a peaceful and stable transition, seeks to promote international assistance to help South Africans overcome those legacies of apartheid. The Special Committee has always been of the view that it is the normal responsibility of the international community to continue fully to assist the South African people on their long road to building a strong and prosperous nation.

(The Chairman)

Escalations of violence have swept the country recently, in the weeks since political leaders set the date for the first non-racial elections. A most horrific example of such violence was the massacre committed by unidentified gunmen who barged into a church - a religious sanctuary - and opened fire on worshippers, killing at least 12 and wounding more than 50. The incident was rightly condemned and called "barbaric" by all the parties to the multiparty negotiations. During the same weekend 45 persons were also murdered in one cluster of black townships east of Johannesburg.

(The Chairman)

The following weekend, in the township of Tembisa, a rampage by a criminal gang killed at least 30 people and injured another 18. Reports of ambushes, taxi killings and "necklacing" have become common. Furthermore, there has been a reappearance of violence in the trains. These incidents mark another low point in the endless chain of violent events taking place in South Africa.

Political observers have said that in recent months the violence has grown more horrifying, for reasons no one seems able to explain fully. Political leaders attribute it to forces bent on destabilizing the transition to democracy. The death toll for the month of July alone is estimated at over 550, making it one of the bloodiest months since the official institution of the apartheid system more than four decades ago.

I have just come back from South Africa, where the Special Committee co-sponsored a three-day Symposium on Political Tolerance: The Role of Opinion-Makers and the Media. The participants, who represented a broad spectrum of South African opinion-makers, media experts, academics, political scientists and trade unionists, along with international observers based in South Africa, explored at length a broad range of issues that are especially crucial in view of the precarious political situation in that country. Among the issues discussed was the role of the media in helping to create a culture of tolerance and peace through responsible and impartial reporting of political events. The media, with its remarkable ability to reach millions, could also assist in the overwhelming task of acquainting new voters with the electoral process. The Special Committee wishes to encourage the South African media to accept a greater responsibility for promoting political tolerance and voter education. The media has the extraordinary potential to

(The Chairman)

help create an atmosphere that could contribute to an election that is free, an election that is fair, an election that is peaceful.

Amidst the rise in violence, which in our opinion is the most extreme form of political intolerance, the draft Interim Constitution was released by the Technical Committee to the multi-party negotiators for study and consideration. While there have been intense negative reactions to the draft by some major political groupings, it is hoped that this draft will be a starting-point for concrete and positive discussions of a new and workable constitutional dispensation, including the necessary transitional arrangements in the run-up to the first democratic, non-racial elections. Negotiators should realize that it is becoming increasingly clear that unless a credible representative and legitimate Government is established through a democratic process, the problem of violence in South Africa cannot be effectively addressed.

The Special Committee appeals, once again, to all the leaders of the 26 parties to the negotiating process to push the process forward without delay, to remain within the framework of multi-party talks, and to strive to continue on the path of consensus, which has already been achieved on a number of consitutional issues. As the thorny process of negotiating a future dispensation approaches its most critical phase, political leaders should be mindful of the fact that the hopes and dreams of peace, security, equality and, indeed, prosperity of some 40 million South Africans of all races are in their hands. They have the potential to humanize a troubled society and move it away from violence, to help their fellow South Africans uplift themselves after decades of extreme poverty and social deprivation and build the pillars that will guarantee basic fundamental rights for every South African, regardless of race, creed, ethnic origin or gender.

(The Chairman)

It is now my distinct honour and pleasure to invite Mr. James O. C. Jonah, Under-Secretary-General, who is representing the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to make a statement.

Mr. JONAH (Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs): It gives me great pleasure to read out the following statement by the Secretary-General:

"This International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa is being observed at a time of important political developments in South Africa. The multi-party negotiations have entered a decisive phase, as decisions with regard to future constitutional arrangements, the establishment of the Transitional Executive Council, and the modalities of the first non-racial elections are being made. I would like to take this opportunity to once again urge all parties to make every effort to overcome their remaining differences in order to achieve a workable political settlement as soon as possible.

"South Africa cannot afford any more delays and setbacks in the process towards a political settlement. It is imperative that all parties refrain from unilateral actions and make every effort to end the ongoing violence and to strengthen the structures required for building a society based on political tolerance and the widest possible participation of all political formations and social groups. Only a speedy political settlement will allow South Africans to begin to address issues related to the critical socio-economic needs, in order to safeguard the foundations of prosperity in that country.

"Today we pay tribute to the women of South Africa for their courageous struggle for freedom, justice and equal opportunities for a

(Mr. Jonah)

better life in a new, non-racial, democratic South Africa. The women of South Africa have for decades struggled against the system of apartheid and have recently joined together with their countrymen in a process of participation, setting the stage for the dawn of a new era in their country, in which democratic values and the principles of equality of rights will be ensured.

"Unfortunately, the unrelenting cycle of violence continues unabated in South Africa, spreading anguish, fear and distrust among a people who have borne these burdens far too long and a society that is in dire need of healing and reconciliation. Women are neither the fomenters nor the perpetrators of the ongoing violence in South Africa. As I stated in my report to the Security Council last December, women continue to be the innocent victims of violence and intimidation from a variety of sources. They already bear the brunt of the effects of violence on the social fabric - the loss of family members, trauma, the dislocation of families and communities. As if all of that were not enough, the innocent and hapless victims of the violence seem often to be women, children and the elderly. I strongly urge once again that special attention be given to the problems of violence and intimidation directed at women. That is important especially in view of the crucial role women play in maintaining cohesion and stability in their communities and thereby in society at large. I also stressed in the report the need to bring the country's women into the political process as full partners.

"I am pleased to note that women's rights and concerns are being discussed as part of a future Bill of Rights in South Africa. A new Constitution for South Africa must include provisions for equality and the full emancipation of all South African women.

(Mr. Jonah)

"Notwithstanding the prevalence of violence - punctuated by tragedies of gruesome, large-scale massacres - which prevents their full participation in the ongoing political process, women in South Africa have shown their customary resilience and perseverance in seeking to ensure that gender equality is duly enshrined in the new Constitution and that their representatives are actively involved in giving their input on gender-related issues at the multi-party negotiating forum. Women are reported to constitute over 50 per cent of eligible voters in South Africa. The importance of their full and equal participation in all matters related to the political dispensation which we all hope is imminent in South Africa cannot be overstated."

The CHAIRMAN: I now invite Mr. José Luis Jesus, Vice-President of the General Assembly, to make a statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly.

Mr. JESUS (Cape Verde), Vice-President of the General Assembly: On behalf of the President of the General Assembly, I should like to make the following statement:

"It gives me great pleasure to join members of the Special Committee against Apartheid, representatives of Member States and representatives of the people of South Africa in this year's observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa. We are gathered here to pay tribute to those 20,000 black and white South African women who in 1956 protested against the pass laws' being extended to African women. Their protest demonstrated their courage and determination not to become subservient to the injustice of racially motivated legislation and to safeguard their civil liberties and those of their countrymen.

(Mr. Jesus, Vice-President of the General Assembly)

"This International Day is being observed against the backdrop of significant political developments in South Africa. Some of these developments give us reason to be cautiously optimistic that agreements with regard to transitional arrangements will soon be reached, leading to the election of a constitutent assembly in 1994. The challenge facing all South Africans is to accept and ensure the widest possible participation of all segments of society in this process.

"The struggle for women's rights, long overshadowed by the struggle against apartheid, has entered a new phase as that country faces the prospect of its first democratic ballot. It is our sincere hope that the participation of women and the principle of gender equality will be given their due importance in the negotiation process currently under way in South Africa.

"However, escalating violence continues to claim hundreds of innocent lives, a great many of the defenceless victims being women and children. The continuing violence and the stark socio-economic inequalities in South Africa pose a great threat to the process leading to a just political settlement.

"In the face of these relentless tragedies and the socio-economic legacies of apartheid, South African women persevere and manifest on a daily basis the admirable fortitude and resolve with which they confronted institutionalized apartheid for so many years. As they rightly seek to ensure that gender equality is enshrined in the future Constitution of South Africa, the international community must spare no effort to ensure that their lives and those of their families are protected and that assistance is provided for the development of the

(Mr. Jesus, Vice-President of the General Assembly)

rudimentary elements of infrastructure upon which they depend - namely, education, employment, health and housing.

"The Secretary-General has eloquently and candidly drawn attention to the particular toll taken on women as a consequence of political violence, intimidation and poverty, which prevent their full participation in the political process. He has underlined the importance of women's being full partners in that process. However, as we and the people of South Africa well know, the cornerstone for building a new South Africa based on equality and justice for all is the early establishment of a non-racial and democratic system of government in South Africa in which all its citizens actively shape a common and shared future, a goal for which so many of them have striven for so long. In this noble endeavour they can be assured of the full and concerted support of the international community."

The CHAIRMAN: I now have pleasure in inviting the Honorable Joyce F. Brown, Deputy Mayor of the City of New York, our host city, to make a statement. Besides holding an esteemed position in the City of New York, the Deputy Mayor has been actively involved in the international campaign against apartheid. We are greatly honoured that she is able to join us today.

Ms. BROWN: It is an honour to participate in this solemn meeting in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa.

Thirty-seven years ago today the bravery and determination of South Africa's mothers, daughters and sisters was demonstrated for the world to witness. They stood tall and they stood strong in protest against the racist regime's pass laws.

(Ms. Brown)

I am proud to come before the Special Committee today on behalf of 8 million New Yorkers who understand the value of justice and liberty. All New Yorkers of conscience are in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in South Africa, people who have struggled through their entire lives for the sweet taste of freedom, yet who still face many difficult battles. Although an ocean separates us, spiritually we stand by their side, reaffirming our deep and unrelenting commitment to peace and democracy in South Africa's strife-torn land. We grieve for this land still steeped in pain and suffering. But while the anguish we feel is profound, our grief is a mobilizing force.

I am proud to be a part of the administration of Mayor David N. Dinkins, this city's first African-American Mayor and a steadfast soldier in the fight for freedom in South Africa. Under his leadership our city has figured prominently in the international effort to bring to an end the only legalized system of racism in the world today: South African apartheid.

Nearly four decades ago our South African sisters rejected the racist policy which required blacks to provide identification to be allowed into South Africa's white areas. These passes - chains and shackles made of paper - were living proof of the oppressive regime's view of South Africa's black people. Our South African mothers, daughters and sisters refused to suffer the degradation and indignity connected to those pieces of paper. They refused to be defined by a document created by a Government that was not their own, a Government that sought to define their position and their place.

It is a special gift of women to demonstrate their resolve and to fight for what is just. Everyone here knows the proverb that speaks to the courage

(Ms. Brown)

of these South African women and to the spirit of women throughout the ages, a proverb to the effect that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the nation and its destiny. In point of fact, the hand that rocks the cradle is the rock that holds the cradle, and without that rock there is no cradle.

It is now the midpoint of 1993, the year of the woman in America. It became the year of the woman because women across this country said that politically they had been pushed too far from the centre of the circle of power, just as the women of South Africa did 37 years ago. At President Clinton's inauguration, in January this year, an African-American woman was selected to address the nation with her poetry. She spoke to us in "On the Pulse of Morning" about the past and our future, and she said:

"But today the Rock cries out to us, clearly, forcefully,
Come, you may stand upon my
Back and face your distant destiny,
But seek no haven in my shadow.
I will give you no more hiding place down here."

(Ms. Brown)

The words reflect a kind of honesty about us. Like the rock, women have endured, and like the rock, without upheaval, we will stay in the same place. As Frederick Douglass told us, the limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress. Indeed, the courage and determination of the women of South Africa changed the limits of the tyrants and advanced the struggle of a people throughout the townships and their homes, schools and churches. And yes, they have rocked the cradle, and in so doing have passed on their strength and their wisdom to generations of crusaders for justice and freedom. And so we find the voice of women in the message embraced by a nation.

I would like to leave you with the words of a powerful writer and teacher who passed away just this year, a woman by the name of Audrey Lord. She wrote:

> "Survival is not an academic skill. It is learning how to stand alone, unpopular and sometimes reviled, and how to make common cause with those others identified as outside the structures in order to define and seek a world in which we can all flourish. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths, for the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house."

So I salute the brave and strong women of South Africa who found their own tools to dismantle the master's house. They inspire us all. We find strength in our spirituality, our soulfulness and our sisterhood. Our bond is strong, and it instils confidence and faith that together we will overcome the vestiges of oppression and change the direction of world leadership.

As the multi-party negotiations continue, we will continue to work to advance the effective transition to majority rule, and participate in the reconstruction of an equitable, prosperous and free South Africa. Black

(Ms. Brown)

women, white women and women of colour must be partner architects, setting the foundation for equal racial and gender opportunity. The struggle for women's rights is not to be separated from that for human rights, for they are one and the same, and the bedrock of a society. We stand with those concerned and wish them Godspeed.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the Deputy Mayor of New York for her very important and, especially, very inspiring address.

I now invite Mrs. Dawlat Hassan, of the Egyptian Permanent Mission to the United Nations, the representative of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, to make a statement.

Mrs. HASSAN (Egypt), Organization of African Unity (OAU) (interpretation from Arabic): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to extend to you, on behalf of the chairmanship of the Organization of African Unity, which I am honoured to represent here, our thanks and deep appreciation for your sincere efforts and the efforts of all the other members of the Special Committee Against Apartheid to mobilize international action to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination in South Africa.

I am pleased to welcome our guests from South Africa and the representatives of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) who are contributing to our celebration today. I am also honoured, on behalf of the chairmanship of the OAU, to join all other participants in paying tribute to the women of South Africa on the thirty-seventh anniversary of the valiant movement they initiated against the racist pass laws, which were a mainstay of apartheid.

(Mrs. Hassan, OAU)

This courageous act was not only a protest against the pass laws; it also had a deeper meaning. It was heroic defiance of the apartheid regime in general, an affirmation by the women of South Africa of their pride in participating in the national struggle and an open call for implementation of their fundamental rights and freedom. This year's celebration of the Day of Solidarity is especially important. The women of South Africa are continuing their struggle against the vestiges of apartheid. They contribute positively to the march of peace by effectively participating in the current negotiations to bring about a political settlement and create an atmosphere of peace based on a non-racial and democratic Constitution. They also work to form the democratic institutions that will ensure respect and protection for the political rights of the citizens of South Africa, and to create the appropriate atmosphere to end violence and eliminate recrimination among the various sectors of society.

The African woman, by participating in this march, is emphasizing the continuation of the struggle to create an honourable life for the children of Africa and to create a better future, in which women participate on an equal footing with men. I remind those present that the African leaders and high-ranking officials who met in Cairo last June welcomed the resumption of negotiations through the multilateral negotiating forum. They also welcomed the special agreement on scheduling the first democratic elections in South Africa, which are planned for 27 April 1994.

I would also like to emphasize the interest expressed by the Cairo meeting in reaffirming Africa's determination to eliminate apartheid and to establish a democratic, non-racial, unified State through genuine negotiations. It is our hope that the international community, following the

(Mrs. Hassan, OAU)

example of the African family, will play a growing role in assisting peaceful negotiations leading to a settlement, and in implementing the General Assembly's 1989 Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa, which was adopted by consensus, as well as the resolutions of the Security Council, particularly resolution 765 (1992), which urges the South African authorities to take immediate measures to eliminate racial discrimination and violence in South Africa.

The South African authorities have taken positive measures to create a better atmosphere for negotiations. However, we call upon them to enhance those measures in order to create the appropriate atmosphere for free political activity by all citizens. A political settlement is urgently needed, in order to create a society of peace and stability so that South Africa can confront its economic and social problems, embark on a course of progress and development and build a modern State that will make a positive contribution to the African and the international family.

(Mrs. Hassan, OAU)

Today, while it is true that the pass laws against which women in South Africa have protested no longer exist, the other apartheid structures still do, unfortunately. They include, for example, restrictions on residence and the right to work; unequal remuneration; social and economic injustices, such as poverty and inadequate health care; and housing, education and job opportunity problems; along with other inadequacies which are not in keeping with international developments in a world about to enter the twenty-first century. This makes our celebration today not only a tribute to the struggle of the women of South Africa, but also an expression of our support for these women in their struggle and continued efforts to eliminate such injustices and restrictions.

Our task is clear. The commitment of the international community to provide continuously all forms of assistance to South Africa makes it necessary to reinforce the march towards non-racial democracy and to eliminate the continued violence, which is a constant cause of concern. The international community should also lend a hand of friendship and support to the people of South Africa to help them confront social and economic inequalities, particularly those facing the most vulnerable group, the women and children, to enable them to overcome deprivation and social injustice.

On this occasion, Egypt takes pleasure, as the current Chairman of OAU, in emphasizing once again our full solidarity with the women of South Africa, who are still carrying the lion's share of the heavy burden resulting from the long decades of apartheid. We reiterate our pledge to support their efforts and fully to coordinate with the United Nations in all its efforts to find a political solution, and to mobilize all the human and material potential necessary to build together a new society where freedom, equality and prosperity prevail in the interests of all the people of South Africa.

The CHAIRMAN: I now have the pleasure to invite the representative of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), Dr. Nkosazana Zuma, to make a statement. Dr. Zuma is a member of the Executive Committee of the ANC Women's League and currently the Chairperson of its Southern Natal Region. She is a medical doctor by profession. In 1976 Dr. Zuma was forced to leave South Africa on account of her membership of the ANC, while in her fifth year in medical school. She returned to South Africa in 1990 after the unbanning of the organization, as part of the advance team to re-establish the ANC, and especially the Women's League, as political factors inside South Africa. She is a freedom fighter in her own right, and we of the Special Committee are glad that she is able to join us today. It is therefore my honour and great pleasure to call on Dr. Zuma.

Ms. ZUMA (African National Congress of South Africa (ANC)): On behalf of the African National Congress and the Women's League, I should like to thank the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid for inviting us to this International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa.

All the peace-loving people of our country, including the women, had hoped that this was going to be a very exciting time, with an election date in sight, but, sadly, this seems to be the darkest hour before the dawn. Violence has engulfed our country like a vicious veld fire. Men, women and children have died in Bisho, Table Mountain, Mpushini, Kenilworth, Boipatong, Phola Park, Bambayi, Port Shepstone, Tembisa and various other places. Blood and tears continue to flow in our land.

Women have to take responsibility to look for missing relatives and provide food, shelter and comfort when their homes have been burned down, and

(Ms. Zuma, ANC)

they have to bury the dead. They do not even have the luxury to grieve in peace.

Violence and migrant labour mean the disruption of families, the dislocation of communities, the breakdown of discipline, a rise in teenage pregnancies, and escalating rape and domestic violence, which also encourage the spread of AIDS.

Women have to bear the brunt of the unrelenting drought, unemployment and the recession. There is grinding poverty, especially in the rural areas. The situation of women's rights and gender discrimination in our country is about two decades behind that of the rest of the world.

Our country did not benefit from the United Nations Decade for Women, because of its isolation. Women, especially married women, do not have equal status with men. They still need their husbands' signatures for financial and other contracts. They are taxed far higher than men, if they happen to be employed. Women are not in the decision-making process in politics, industry, professional or academic institutions.

Water, sanitation, housing and electricity are still not accessible for most women. African women cannot even own a piece of land in the rural areas under the chiefs. Not all employers give maternity leave to those women who are employed. The situation seems to be very bad, and our only hope is the women themselves.

South African women have always been part of the liberation struggle. They have always fought for the liberation of the most oppressed and for the restoration of the dignity of the African people. The 9 August march by 20,000 women from the length and breadth of our country was part of this struggle. Of course, they have a double burden, as they have to make sure

(Ms. Zuma, ANC)

that gender discrimination disappears simultaneously with racial discrimination.

Women of the ANC, who have done a tremendous amount of work in changing the African National Congress from a purely male organization to one in which women participate as equal members, have had to lead the struggle to create space for women at the negotiating table. Initially, women were excluded from the negotiations at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). The ANC women made sure that the ANC demanded the inclusion of women at CODESA; hence the formation of the Gender Advisory Committee.

When the multi-party talks resumed on 18 March this year women were again excluded. The African National Congress proposed that women should be part of the delegation. Although most parties initially ridiculed the suggestion, subsequent pressure by women, with the support of the international community, led to a decision that each party had to have a woman and a man as delegates at the negotiation council. It was also stated that the parties that did not want to bring a woman as the second delegate would forfeit their second delegate's space. This marked a victory for women.

(Ms. Zuma, ANC)

Women have to be vigilant within their parties to make sure that policies are gender-sensitive. In negotiations they have to apply a women's perspective to general matters and, more importantly, ensure that decisions taken do not prejudice the position of women.

The multi-party negotiations have laid a basis for addressing gender imbalances, at least within the Constitution and the bill of rights. The equality clause, the proposed repeal of gender-discriminatory legislation and the recent agreement on a transitional executive council (TEC) sub-council on the status of women are all hard-won victories for women.

It is very clear to the women of South Africa that the new South Africa will bring nothing for women other than what they have gained through the struggles on the ground.

In order to strengthen their position women have come together on issues of common interest across the political spectrum to draw up a charter of women's rights. Demands are being collected from women so that the Constitution, the bill-of-rights legislation and Government programmes are guided by the aspirations of women as well.

Women constitute about 53 per cent of the population and are a crucial sector of the electorate; as such they are a strong force. As the majority of women have never voted, there is a need for an effective voter-education campaign to motivate women to vote, educate them on how to vote and assure them that their vote is secret and equal to that of men. Creative means have to be found to implement this, since the majority of African women cannot read or write.

Women refuse to be seen as only brigades of workers canvassing support for the political parties or voters in the coming election; they insist that they have to be seen as candidates as well in the coming election.

(Ms. Zuma, ANC)

Political parties have to convince women, both by their policies and by their candidate lists, that women have something to gain by voting for them. Women have, through their own struggles, made women's rights an election issue.

The contribution of the international community in our struggles cannot be overemphasized. We salute the women and men of the world for their untiring support.

The late President of the African National Congress of South Africa, Oliver Tambo, said "No country can boast of being free unless its women are free." The women of South Africa say "Do not give up until we have a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa." Let us walk the last mile together, as we have done for thousands of miles."

Now is the time to strengthen solidarity with South African women. Now is the time for gender equality. And now is the time to help reconstruct our country and restore the dignity of the African people.

The CHAIRMAN: I now invite the representative of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), Ms. Cynthia Bekwa, to make a statement. She is a leading member of the PAC, a member of the National Executive Council of the National Literacy Cooperation and the Secretary of the African Women's Organization.

Ms. BEKWA (Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC)): On behalf of the struggling, dispossessed and exploited people of Azania, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), custodian of the people's genuine aspirations, wishes to thank the Special Committee against Apartheid for its continued observance of this Day.

This Day of Solidarity with the struggle of women in our country, Azania - colonially called South Africa since 20 September 1909, by a statute

(Ms. Bekwa, PAC)

of the British Parliament - gives us the opportunity to draw the attention of the international community to the apartheid and colonial situation experienced by the indigenous African majority. Our people have been denied their right to self-determination and independence by the settler colonialists.

Azanian women derive strength from the solidarity of others. We consider ourselves part of a broad struggle which embraces all Africa and all of progressive humanity. We would be negligent if we did not honour the women who have paved the way in our struggle. Their leadership and sacrifice give our movement its majesty and set an example for all women in situations of oppression, giving them a reason to hope and strive for liberation.

The African women in Azania, like their menfolk, have played a historic role in the struggle to liberate our country from colonialism and racism. Our heroines include - to mention but a few - the Azanian women who on this date in 1956 led the challenge to the neo-Nazi racist settler Prime Minister of South Africa, J. G. Strydom. Our oppressors called Strydom "the lion of the North", but our women proved on this day that he was a paper tiger.

We honour many dynamic women, such as Mmaphoshodi Molapo, popularly known as the Duchess of Africa, who taught us to be uncompromising over land ownership and majority rule in Azania. Mameka Mahanoe, a journalist, after waking up among corpses at the Sharpeville massacre, called the attention of the international community to this unprovoked killing of Azanians. Cecelia Lwana and Comrade Nomatyeketyle were convicted for their underground fund-raising activities for PAC. Boniswa Ncukana died for all Azanian women; she was a freedom fighter shot dead, with five male comrades, on the border of Lesotho and racist South Africa on 10 March 1985. Urbunia Mothopeng was brutally tortured and kept awake for long periods of time.

(Ms. Bekwa, PAC)

We salute mothers from rural areas and cities who have sacrificed and lost their children, such as Mrs. Vulindlela, who lost four sons in one day. Widows such as Mrs. Masemola, Mrs. Pokela, Mrs. Shoba and Mrs. Sobukwe, together with scores more lent their husbands to our struggle, because they believed in total independence for Azanians.

Ninety per cent of the violence in South Africa today is orchestrated by the South African regime through Buffalo Battalions 31 and 32, Koevoets and other mercenaries covertly used to destabilize front-line African States not long ago, with devastating economic effects and colossal loss of human life.

On 14 September 1991, when the so-called National Peace Accord was signed with a fanfare amid the usual euphoria over "positive changes" in South Africa, the President of the PAC, Mr. Clarence Makwetu, demanded on behalf of the dispossessed and oppressed people of Azania that all mercenaries in the country be verifiably expelled under United Nations and Organization of African Unity (OAU) supervision and that an international commission be established to investigate the source and cause of the violence in South Africa. The De Klerk regime rejected this proposal and instead unilaterally appointed its own Commission, called the Goldstone Commission. This Commission has done some good things, but it cannot be the answer to the genocide perpetrated against the victims of apartheid and colonialism in South Africa. In fact, the Goldstone Commission has shown more interest in investigating and harassing the victims of apartheid, especially where a few whites have been killed.

(Ms. Bekwa, PAC)

Since the signing of the so-called National Peace Accord and the appointment of the Goldstone Commission, violence on a genocidal scale has escalated. There have been more than 100 massacres of Africans since 1989. In every respect the position of Africans as concerns the right to life has deteriorated. In 1992 alone 20,135 Africans were killed. This figure comes from the regime's own parliamentary records. It is now estimated that at least 50,000 Africans have been killed in genocidal violence since 1989; none the less, the media and vested interests keep playing down the horrifying figures because they clearly show that genocide is taking place in the country. Many people today believe that the National Peace Accord and the Goldstone Commission would have been abolished long ago if whites were being killed on the scale the Africans are.

The issue of political violence in South Africa must be analysed correctly. The ANC and Inkatha both claim to have whites as members, but only the African members are being killed. Can this really be called political violence? In fact, many of the Africans killed in this so-called political violence did not belong to any political party.

The international community is being misled into believing that this genocidal violence is being committed by a mysterious "third force". Why has this "third force" not been dealt a mortal blow and pursued with the vigour with which African liberation forces are pursued? During the raid on the negotiating forum on 25 May, many elements of the South African regime - policemen and soldiers - were seen shedding their uniforms to join the right wing in that ugly and barbaric demonstration.

The assistance - political, military, economic and other - given to the racist regime of South Africa has adverse consequences on the South African people's enjoyment of human rights.

(Ms. Bekwa, PAC)

A low-intensity war is being waged against Africans in South Africa. The racist colonialist regime of South Africa has a military budget of more than R11 billion; a total of R5 billion has been set aside for secret operations. These vast sums of money are not subject to audit. The South African regime continues to conscript while it claims to speak of peace. In recent weeks we have received information that commandos and other military forces are being trained in two European countries to go and fight in South Africa. Various non-governmental organizations are busy lobbying to stop this training and to prevent the granting of passports to these killers so that they can join in murdering the African people.

I should today like to draw the Committee's attention to the fact that South African security forces have been implicated in 2,000 per cent more complaints of violence than the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA); 900 times more prosecutions than the APLA; and 200 times more convictions than the APLA; and there have been four reports condemning the South African police, compared with one Goldstone Commission provisional report. The Goldstone Commission report is itself based on hearsay evidence from the police and the regime's military intelligence. According to the law of evidence, these forces can be described only as hostile witnesses. Indeed, those who respect the rule of law and hold dear the principles of natural justice, such as audi alteram partem, have dismissed the findings of the Goldstone Commission. After all, it was established by the South African regime.

The killing of Africans is intended to reduce the African population numerically. Against the background of the regime's genocide is the massive recruitment of European immigrants, especially from Eastern European countries. The Committee must be reminded that the South African regime gives

(Ms. Bekwa, PAC)

guns to whites but not easily to Africans. The white civilian population in South Africa has more than 2.5 million guns.

The PAC is not involved in so-called black-on-black violence. The PAC leadership has on many occasions approached Chief Buthelezi of the Inkatha Freedom Party and Mr. Mandela of the African National Congress, offering to mediate so that their political rivalry can be peaceful and so that there can be peace and unity among the oppressed.

The South African regime has tried to make the PAC its scapegoat. It has blamed the PAC for the death of white civilians killed by the regime's own agents and collaborators. The South African regime is a chameleon. When a chameleon changes its colours, that is not a change; it is camouflage. A chameleon always changes its colours when in danger in order to protect its own interests.

The Eikenhof incident this year is a classic example. An innocent and defenceless white woman and her two children were killed. The South African regime accused one of the PAC structures of involvement. After this false propaganda had gone all over the world, the killers were found and identified as agents of the regime or its collaborators. They were not APLA. These killers are now in the custody of the South African regime. The regime knows who they are and must tell the world the truth.

Commenting on the hysteria that followed this unfortunate incident, an African journalist, Mathata Tsedu, wrote:

> "As days went by, news about PAC's involvement in the attack became deafening. The PAC leadership must come clean, Kriel ... demanded. The PAC said ... it was not its policy to attack women and children. This was seen as an egg dance by the media, which ... took the police cue that

(Ms. Bekwa, PAC)

the attacks bore the hallmarks of APLA strategies. ... Then came the arrest of the two suspects and the initial police refusal to confirm rumours that the men were linked ... not to the PAC".

That journalist asked:

"What happened to APLA's hallmarks in this attack as the police saw them? The same police force which testified before the Goldstone Commission and their guidance was used to reach its conclusion".

There is no reason to change the title of General Assembly resolution 45/176 on South Africa, "Policies of Apartheid of the Government of South Africa". The apartheid tricameral Parliament, declared null and void by Security Council resolution 554 (1984), remains. The international community should not allow De Klerk's genocidal regime to go free after committing crimes against humanity.

The PAC's position is that all killings in South Africa, not only those of whites, must stop. All life is sacred and God-given. There is no human life that is less human or more human. Human life is human life. It must receive equal treatment and protection.

The PAC has condemned the killing of people in a church in Cape Town on 25 July 1993. The PAC has also drawn attention to numerous incidents in which bereaved Africans mourning their murdered relatives or friends were sprayed with bullets, while praying or singing hymns, by faceless killers, mercenaries and local death squads in the service of the South African regime.

It is an open secret that the De Klerk regime does not treat the death of Africans with the seriousness it attaches to every European death. For instance, in the King Williamstown incident five white people received more

(Ms. Bekwa, PAC)

attention than the 25 Africans who were killed by the Buffalo Battalion and Koevoets mercenaries the same day.

Within minutes of the King Williamstown incident 42 military vehicles were on the spot. A reward of R60,000 was offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the perpetrators.

At the Boipatong massacre an 85-year-old grandmother, Mrs. Elizabeth Ndamase, was killed; and a nine-month-old baby, Aaron Mathope, was murdered. No reward was offered to track down the perpetrators of these acts. The whole tragic episode was cheaply blamed on "black-on-black" violence, for the gullible. There was none of the hysteria that occurs when white people are killed.

In March 1993 six African children in uniform were cruelly murdered in Natal. This time, and for the first time, a reward of R20,000 was offered for information. The motive, however, was the resumption of negotiations.

When three white people were killed outside Johannesburg R200,000 was offered for information. The basis for this disparity is naked racism and apartheid colonialism.

Man is made in the image of God and after His likeness. There are no human beings on Earth who have a better image of God than others. Therefore, the demons of racism must be exorcised and banished from civilized society.

The CHAIRMAN: The last speaker is Mrs. Somaia Barghouti, the representative of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations. I invite her to make her statement.

Mrs. BARGHOUTI (Palestine): Allow me, on behalf of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine, to express our thanks and appreciation for the invitation that you, Mr. Chairman, have extended to us to participate in this important meeting on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa.

It has been declared that the present time is the woman's decade. However, although more and more women have indeed become involved in the areas of leadership and decision-making, it is clear that the majority of women do not enjoy equality and opportunity for participation. There is still much that needs to be done in order for this to be truly considered a decade of concrete and advanced achievements by women.

Today women around the world continue to suffer, and many are denied even the most basic of human rights. South African women continue to suffer from the discriminatory, racist and oppressive policy of apartheid in their country. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of their sisters in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been systematically raped, abused and forced to flee their homes, and thousands have been killed as a result of the policy of "ethnic cleansing". Palestinian women are still denied their basic and fundamental human rights - mainly their right to self-determination - and are subjected to daily repression at the hands of the Israeli occupation authorities. These cases represent only the most extreme of many such situations throughout the world.

The Palestinian people, who share a common history and destiny with the people of South Africa, would like to pay a tribute on this solemn occasion

(Mrs. Barghouti, Palestine)

to the heroic struggle of South African women who have sacrificed their lives for the attainment of freedom in their struggle against the racism and oppression of the illegal apartheid system.

For many decades women in South Africa have endured a tremendous amount of exploitation and have been subjected to the most inhuman treatment by the racist South African regime. Their suffering has been manifested in their imprisonment, the destruction of their family unit, physical and psychological torture, and severe economic repression and poverty.

Despite the recent escalation of acts of brutality and violence by South African forces, which has resulted in the loss of thousands of lives and left hundreds of thousands of persons - the majority of them women and children - homeless, especially in the Natal, Tembisa and Transvaal areas, South African women recognize the positive changes emanating from the ongoing attempts to dismantle the apartheid system and build a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist South Africa.

To recognize the progress that has been achieved, however, is not enough. South African women today are expressing concern at the fact that women are not integrated in the process of the democratization of their society, as envisaged in the United Nations Declaration on Apartheid. This Declaration, inter alia, reaffirms the need to ensure their participation in that process. Therefore, they continue to struggle to be included in the dismantling of apartheid as well as in the building of a new, democratic and equal society.

Essentially, the progress that South African women have achieved will indeed contribute to the elimination of racism and racial discrimination and to the attainment of freedom and equality for all women, especially Palestinian women, who, like their South African sisters, are more determined

(Mrs. Barghouti, Palestine)

than ever to continue their struggle to end the Israeli occupation and achieve justice and freedom.

On this occasion we wish to urge the international community, in particular the United Nations, to play a more active role in securing peace and justice for South African women, Palestinian women, and women everywhere. Concrete measures should be taken towards the immediate and full implementation of all the relevant resolutions whose aim is the total eradication of apartheid, as well as those whose aim is the end of the Israeli occupation and of the other injustices throughout the world.

The CHAIRMAN: We have just heard the last speaker at our meeting today.

Before adjourning the meeting, I wish to inform the Committee that on the occasion of this observance many Heads of State or Government have graciously sent messages to the Special Committee. Such messages have been received from Algeria, Brazil, Ghana, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Venezuela. Also, statements have been received from the World Federation of Trade Unions and the International Federation of Democratic Women. On behalf of the Special Committee, I wish to thank all those who have sent messages or expressed public solidarity with the struggle of women in South Africa.

In concluding today's observance, I should like to express once again our gratitude and thanks to all the participants in this meeting for their support of and solidarity with the many who have suffered for so long under apartheid, and with all those, in various parts of the world, who are victims of racial discrimination.

(The Chairman)

I wish also to invite the participants here - and, of course, the members of the Special Committee - to attend a briefing meeting that will begin at 3 p.m. today, in Conference Room 8. That briefing meeting is designed to offer members of the United Nations community an opportunity to interact and to be briefed by our guests - who came here from South Africa specially to participate in today's commemorative meeting - on pertinent issues related to today's observance and other matters of particular concern to South African women in the ongoing process of negotiations, particularly at this critical period leading to a non-racial election in April 1994.

I should also like to remind everyone that the press conference sponsored by the Special Committee against Apartheid will take place in Room 226 at 12.45 p.m., in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa. Featured speakers will include Ms. Zuma and Ms. Bekwa, who have spoken here today as representatives of, respectively, the African National Congress of South Africa and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.